

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASTC C 2018

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 3069

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJECT: TRIBAL OPPOSITION TO HAMDI

BEGIN SUMMARY: STAND-OFF WHICH FOLLOWED JULY 19 AND 20 MILITARY ACTIONS BY YARG IN NORTH CONTINUES TO PREVAIL WITH ROAD TO SA'ADA OPEN FOR GENERAL PURPOSES. NEWS OF NORTH IN LAST WEEK-AND-HALF HAS BEEN DOMINATED BY TRIBAL POLITICS. END SUMMARY.

1. FROM ALL SIDES IN SANA, YEMENI AND FOREIGN ALIKE, THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE YARG MILITARY MOVES IN THE MIDDLE OF JULY, PLUS THE LIMITED AIR STRIKES, HAVE CREATED A SALUTARY CALM. THE ROAD TO SA'ADA IS OPEN AND APPARENTLY EVEN MILITARY VEHICLES CAN MAKE THE TRIP. TRIBAL ROADBLOCKS EXIST BUT THEY ARE REDUCED IN NUMBER AND GIVE CARS ONLY PERFUNCTORY CHECKS. COMMUNICATIONS OF SOME SORT, CARRIED BY RANKING EMISSARIES OF YARG, CONTINUE BETWEEN ABDALLAH BIN HUSSAIN AL-AHMAR AND YAR PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI

2. NO NONE EXPECTS MUCH TO COME OF THESE COMMUNICATIONS, HOWEVER, GIVEN THE BITTER PERSONAL RIVALRY BETWEEN THE TWO MEN, AND SPECULATION IN SANA HAS FOCUSED ON EMERGENCY OF INDEPENDENT TRIBAL FIGURES LIKE ABDALLAH KHAMIS AL-AWJARI OF
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THE SAHAR TRIBE AROUND SA'ADA AND THE REDOUBTABLE SINAN ABU LUHUM OF THE NAHM.

3. CONCERNING THE LATTER, WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL REPORTS FROM GOOD SOURCES THAT HE HAS MANUFACTURED HIS ELECTION AS THE PARAMOUNT SHAYKH OF THE BAKIL FEDERATION OF TRIBES. IF TRUE, THIS WOULD DRAW AWAY A LOT OF THE CONSTITUENCY THAT ABDALLAH

BIN HUSSAIN AL-AHMAR HAS CLAIMED TO REPRESENT AS YEMEN'S
LEADING TRIBAL CHIEFTAIN, HEAD OF THE HADHID FEDERATION.

4. BAKIL FEDERATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN MUCH MORE NUMEROUS THAN
HASHID BUT SPREAD OVER MUCH BROADER AND POORER AREAS. IT
LACKS ANY TRADITION OF COHESIVE LEADERSHIP, UNLIKE HASHID
TRIBES WHICH ARE CONCENTRATED HASHID MEANS CONCENTRATION,
AROUND SANA AND ROAD TO THE NORTH. SINAN'S ELECTION, HOWEVER,
WOULD PUT HIM IN GOOD POSITION TO ORGANIZE RESISTANCE TO
GOVERNMENT IN ARHAB AS WELL AS HIS OWN HOME TRIBAL AREA OF
NAHAM, WHICH BOTH DIRECTLY NORTHEAST OF SANA. HIS ELECTION
COULD ALSO GIVE HIS RELATIVES AND FRIENDS AMONG LEFTIS
POLITICIANS WHO ARE NOW IN EXILE (AS WELL AS THEIR RADICAL
PATRONS IN LIBYA AND IRAQ) BETTER ACCESS TO INTERNAL POLITICS
OF YEMEN AND TO POTENTIAL TRIBES FOR MILITARY ACTION.

5. BY SAME TOKEN, HOWEVER, GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE EASIER
TIME DEALING WITH DIVIDED TRIBAL HOST AND SEVERAL LEADERS
THAN IT HAS CONTESTING ABDALLAH B
K HUSSAIN BY HIMSELF.
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